SAA's shanty makes valid statement to Aggies I

permit expires.

Opinion

Most of you have seen the shanty and have opinions about what it is, what its presence is attempting to accomplish and who the people are who constructed it. I recently spoke with Jeff Dyess, president of ŚAA, and we discussed some of the goals, motivations and backgrounds of the group.

In May of 1985, when South Africa was in the news daily, Norman Murray, a student from Kenya, founded Students Against Apartheid. He did so because when he was young, his native Kenya had a system of segregation similar to South Africa's.

Today, Students Against Apartheid is perceived by some as a group of radical liberals. Actually, it is composed of students who are genuinely concerned about the situation in South Africa. Mr. Dyess spoke knowledgeably on apartheid — the governmental system designed decades ago by whites to suppress blacks in South Africa.

Surprisingly to some, the majority of the group is white. The goals of the organization are definite and pointed: mainly to increase awareness among Texas A&M's students of apartheid's in-Board of Regents to divest from corporations with plants or investments in (whatever those may be).

It may seem amazing to some, but the South Africa. Dyess said that would enshanty erected by Students Against tail pulling about four million dollars, Apartheid remains standing, to be taken roughly 1% of the total worth of A&M, down today by its own members as its out of big companies such as Kodak and

> The group hopes that if a conservative college like A&M divests, other universities and even corporations will follow our lead and join in on the "divestment bandwagon." Whether divestment will ultimately help or hurt South African blacks and Coloureds (of mixed race) is highly debatable, but nonetheless it is a sighted goal of SAA and they intend to make progress to-

> In a realistic tone, Dyess said there is little hope that the group can directly affect the black South Africans or change the white government's policies in any way. They do contribute all the proceeds from benefits, sales, and direct donations to the African Fund, an umbrella organization that distributes resources to underprivileged Africans.

The shanty's purpose was to educate Aggies in any small way about the conditions in South Africa and generally increase awareness and openness of the topic. For a foreign problem to remain in the minds of the members of our content university, it must affect us on a continuing basis. Injustice in Africa does not, and the hope of SAA is to keep the plight of the non-white South justices. Its long-range goal is to get the Africans in our minds, or suffer the ensuing consequences of American apathy



Timm Doolen Columnist

Dyess admits that their movement is more symbolic than anything - an attempt by a few students to outwardly show concern for millions of people who share a different language and a different culture. They care for the rights of a group of people whom they've never met and may never know.

For their concern and their actions, they should be commended. They are in an ideological battle with people such as the two men who crucified doves in last spring's shanty. This year the shanty has remained standing which possibly says something about the way the attitudes on this campus have changed. The people who last year would have thoughtlessly torn down the shanty now remain unseen, leaving the constructed symbol of apartheid's ravages unharmed.

There are a few people who disagree with SAA's methods or ideals (no rational person is for apartheid), though they are not as visible this year. Maybe they have learned that effective discourse is more civilized in the form of letters to The Battalion or open commu- eventually, but in the interim we can't

nication than destruction on campus. risk losing an ally such as South & Some claim it should be removed because the shanty is an eyesore and ugly on campus. So what?

I asked Jeff, with the multitude of crises and injustices in the world, why the group chose apartheid as a focus? He said because the issue is divided on a clear-cut racial issue and South Africa is one of the last "democratic" nations in the world that is promoting racial inequality. The nation's government is a product of European conquests, but is hands of time, but can withstand divided from the current European ide- eventual outcome of racial equals ology of true democracy and equality so long. Already changes in law between the races.

I disagree with the group on the question of divestment as a catalyst to the solution of the problem. In the broad spectrum of world events, I happen to favor constructive engagement rather than turning our back on our ally change from within rather than without. Isolating South Africa economically could make it virtually independent, as has already begun, or turn them to the East Bloc nations, though doubtful. Either way the United States and the Europeans could lose what little influence we have on the South African govern-

Recently, South African troops helped fight communism in Namibia and Angola. Fifty thousand communist Cubans are scheduled to leave Africa because of the presence of South African troops. Internal change will come

as a result of our economic sanction

I also wonder whether their eff couldn't be more greatly reward another realm of worldly com Dyess and the group understand they are severely limited in what can do to directly stop racism and pression in South Africa. Noneth they have committed themselves a wish them well.

South Africa is trying to hold bad cerning trade unions and interracia and marriage have started the protowards a freer South Africa.

South Africa still has generation progress to undergo with regards policies, and what remains is a long dious, and largely unsatisfying in towards an unprivileged government

As the shanty disappears from campus today, we may soon forget it stood for or that it stood at all Students Against Apartheid has more in the past 10 days than a long ganizations on campus have don year. It has effectively stimulated of us to at least begin to think about issue and ask, "What is apartheid?" importantly, it has caused us to about something, anything, outside comfortable world of security.

Timm Doolen is a sophomore puter science major and columns The Battalion.

Mail Call

Student Government 'farsighted'

Some say that Student Government serves no purpose here at Texas A&M. We, however, must strongly disagree. The student senate's recent decisive, farsighted action to clarify their long-term committment to the Open Meetings Act displays the crucial role that the institution plays on our campus, especially in light of the Pan American University situation.

We also commend the senate on their appointment of Shannon Maloney as student liasion to the Bryan and College Station city councils. Their decision shows an acute awareness of the issues affecting students today.

Mike Fitch '89

accompanied by four signatures

Dukakis clearly the winner

Gov. Mike Dukakis clearly won the Sept. 27 debate. Dukakis showed that he is not a passionless technocrat, but that he cares deeply about housing, health care, education and defense. Dukakis was cool and in control while Bush appeared bumbly and incoherent. What really came across in the debate was the fact that Dukakis cares about the average American while Bush panders to the wealthy and the ultra right.

Bush forgot the name of the MX missile and when asked to name three specific weapons systems he would cut, he named three that had been scrapped since 1986. Bush said he wanted to "banish chemical and biological weapons from the face of the earth." Why then did he cast the tie-breaking Senate vote to resume production of chemical weapons? Bush's answers were devoid of substance. The one new idea he had was to halve the capital gains tax which would give the top two percent of wage earners in society a tax break of nearly \$30,000 a year.

Vice-President Bush hopes the country will choose a vacuous conservative "in touch with the mainstream" rather than a "a strong liberal democrat," but if conservative means pledging allegiance to the Falwell-Swaggart-Bush position on social issues, which includes cutting social security and health care benefits, then I

Dr. Louise Weingrod

Quayle selection stupifying

I am completely stupified by George Bush's selection of Dan Quayle as his running mate. Quayle's discussions at the debate caused me to view him as an evasive, unclear and almost thoughtless politician. Many of his answers left me saying to myself, "What did he just say?!?" His responses reminded me of my high school essays when I knew absolutely nothing about the topic

Perhaps George Bush felt a qualified running mate like Robert Dole might create a "power struggle" in the Oval Office, and so he opted for an easilydominated alternative in the form of Dan Quayle. While this selection may have fit some calculated image mold for the Republican party, it left much to be desired in terms of quality of the candidate.

It is probably too late for Bush to recall his selection of Quayle and choose someone (anyone?) else as his running mate. Such a move would be unprecedented, but I think it would be worth the effort to ensure that Dan Quayle would remain un-presidented. Our national offices are not training grounds, and we as voters shouldn't have to settle for underqualified candidates.

David L. Martin '89

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

The Battalion

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War on Drugs actually assault on our Constitutional rights

It seems that nearly everyone agrees that the War on Drugs must be won. Yet the price of winning that war may be higher than Americans should lightly

The War on Drugs bears an alarming resemblance to nuclear war: it is a war in which the harm done to innocent victims in the long run is likely to exceed the harm done to the enemy.

Teresa Miller of Houston, Texas, is one such innocent victim of the War on Drugs. On Sept. 4, Miller was returning with a friend from a shopping trip in Mexico. At Progreso, a U.S. port of entry on the Mexican border, U.S. Customs agents seized her car under the new Zero Tolerance policy against drugs, according to a Sept. 8 Associated Press story.

Miller's car was not seized to be auctioned because Customs agents had found drugs in the car. They had found no drugs, and both Miller and her friend said they do not even use drugs.

Agents seized her car because they had found "paraphernalia" — two fiftycent onyx pipes — that Miller's friend had purchased as a gift for a friend. Thus, to punish the "crime" of her friend, Customs agents will auction off Miller's car, on which she still owes \$5,800, if her appeal is rejected.

The Zero Tolerance Policy, which became effective March 21, was designed to curtail the demand for drugs. Under it, 474 vehicles had been seized through June in Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona and New Mexico alone. Democratic Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas has received five complaints in the last month about seizures along the border.

The Miller case graphically illustrates

Brian Frederick

the dangers to our liberties inherent in the present strategy for the War on Drugs. And the potential for abuse is not limited merely to that inflicted by overly zealous law enforcement officers.

Municipalities seeking to raise money could easily abuse Zero Tolerance. potentially leading to many more cases like Miller's. Private individuals could use it to advantage, too. Placing a small amount of a controlled substance in someone's car or boat and then calling the police would be a simple way wreak vengeance on that hated someone. Politicians and other power brokers could use it to suppress their rivals as in the Soviet Union, where trumped-up drug charges have often been used in recent years to suppress dissidents.

On Sept. 19, the Washington Post described a drug bill before the House, which holds even greater potential for abuse by the authorities.

Among other provisions, the bill would greatly broaden an existing exemption to the "exclusionary rule," which prevents the use of illegally seized evidence in federal criminal trials. It would permit the use of evidence obtained in searches conducted without warrants if, in the judgment of the officers conducting the search, they were acting in "an objective, reasonable, good faith belief" that the search was constitutional.

How a law enforcement officer could think that he was conducting a constitutional search without a warrant

when the Fourth Amendment expir requires warrants for searchesis difficult to conceive. However, its at all difficult to conceive how this attempted assault on drugs would threaten the liberties of all America

Perhaps in their effort to ingrate themselves with the voters in this election year by appearing tought drugs, our Congressmen have for that the Constitution was writtento supply a government of law that we secure Americans from arbitrary government by the whims of men

The drug bill before the House would replace true law with arbitrary whim by making each police office judge of what constitutes a constitutional search. Were all policemen wise and benevolent. could conceivably be tolerable. However, Americans are aware corruption is often as rampanting hall as on the street.

Both the Zero Tolerance Police the House bill pose a threat toom fundamental liberties and need to examined. Unfortunately, political and the media have put American state of near frenzy over the issue drugs, and such a state is not cond to effective debate or reflection.

But Americans cannot afford accept the present strategy against drugs without debate and reflection The War on Drugs may eventual our society of drugs, but as it is currently being waged, it can hard succeed without ridding us of our liberties as well. That is a war well afford to win.

Brian Frederick, an A&M go currently studying history at the versity of Washington, is a form umnist for The Battalion.

BLOOM COUNTY







